

Things did not look so expensive as long as we could cook the books and show a rising tide of revenues. The shell game was on, Mr. President. It got us all re-elected, but it also got us in a ton of debt. I call this problem the Narcotic of Optimism.

There are other examples of attempts by some of us to expose Government by illusion. Let me just describe some that I have taken the lead on, just to illustrate what I am saying:

First, most recently, I and my colleagues in both the House and Senate forced the President's AmeriCorps Program to clean up its act. It is a program that was paying \$29,000 per volunteer. Imagine the taxpayers paying \$29,000 per volunteer. This gave boondoggles at the Pentagon a real run for their money.

We poured through AmeriCorps' documents during a 2-year battle. We shined a big spotlight on the program's activities and costs. We showed where the bulk of the money was going—overhead and bureaucracy. We have now reinvented the program.

Before this, the program never lived up to the President's lofty rhetoric. Now, it has a chance to do what the President says it will do.

Second, I worked hard, with the help of many of my colleagues, on protecting whistleblowers, who are the footsoldiers of the war to expose Government illusions. Every administration waxes poetic about how much they honor whistleblowers. But as soon as our backs are turned, Government managers search them out like a heat-seeking missile.

That is because whistleblowers, want the truth out; Government does not. Congress has toughened up the laws protecting whistleblowers. And we are always on the vigil.

Third, I have worked to pass or bolster initiatives that detect and measure bureaucratic sleight of hand at the Pentagon. We created an independent office of testing to make sure our troops have fully and effectively tested equipment. We were not getting that before.

We have also worked on numerous financial reforms that expose cost and budget problems. All of these are designed to make it easier for us to see what the Pentagon is actually doing, as opposed to what they say they are doing.

I have been at this kind of reform since I first joined the Senate in 1981. Sometimes it is a lonely battle. I often think I can live to be 100 years old and work on reforms non-stop, but I will still only make a dent because the problem is so big.

That is what Presidents are for. Presidential leadership can make the biggest difference in the world. The credibility of the presidency, as leader of the executive branch, can bring leadership to bear on the system and really shake things up. The President has not just the ability to do this, but the responsibility to do it as well.

In fact, Mr. President, these were the types of things that Bill Clinton pledged to do as a Presidential candidate in 1992. He would expose and put an end to the illusions game in Washington. That is what he promised. And that would help put on an equal footing those who had played by the rules, yet had failed to get ahead. And so the American people put their thrust and faith in Bill Clinton to lead the way.

After 4 years, however, a different picture has emerged. As I have specifically laid out in my previous speeches, the President has failed in such leadership, because he has failed to set the proper example.

For instance: How can this President end cronyism and favoritism? He fired innocent, low-level public servants in the White House Travel Office, and gave the travel business to a family member and a slick Hollywood buddy. What kind of example is that for equal treatment and fairness?

How can this President end the failure in this town to take responsibility for one's actions? When the Travelgate Seven were fired, fingers were pointed at others for having made the decision to fire them. What kind of leadership is that? What kind of example is that? How can this White House end the enormous problem in this town of cover-up, and lack of candor and straight shooting?

The mysterious appearance of the Whitewater documents in the White House reading room were blamed on the Document Fairy. Whenever the First Lady or her staff are questioned in either the Whitewatergate or Travelgate affairs, no one can recall a thing.

In my speech of March 28, I gave an example of this. On March 21, the First Lady responded to questions from Chairman CLINGER of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. The subject matter was, who knew what, when, about the firing of the Travelgate Seven. In 16 pages of responses, I counted 54 instances of "I cannot recall," "vague recollection," "it's hard to remember," and so on. Anything but candid, Mr. President. And this from people who are at the very top of their profession—the legal profession—in terms of intelligence and competence. That is kind of hard to swallow.

Moral leadership means leading by example. If you are a leader, that means the people expect you always to be candid in what you say; they expect you to treat everyone fairly and equally; they expect you to be accountable and take responsibility for what you do, both good and bad. That is what people expect in their leaders.

The American people are not getting that kind of leadership from this White House, Mr. President. Instead, they are seeing their leaders commit acts of favoritism, cronyism, avoiding responsibility, cover up. When people who work for such leadership see this, they follow the leader. People tend to do what

their leaders do. Could this be why there are an unprecedented four independent counsels looking into questionable actions of Clinton cabinet secretaries?

We certainly should not be surprised at this record-setting pace for investigating high-level government officials.

I have been searching for an explanation for why an administration that promised to change all this is instead caught up in it, at record levels. I think I may have found a clue. It is a quote from this week's Time magazine. The article is called "Clinton's Stealth Campaign." It is written by Eric Pooley.

Here is what it says:

Since the Republicans control Congress, he [meaning, President Clinton] opted for an illusion of control, which suits him just fine. In this almost holographic approach, speeches are as important as substance and rhetoric becomes its own reality. For this President, says senior adviser George Stephanopoulos, "words are actions."

Do you see, Mr. President? Here is a senior adviser to the President saying "words are actions." There is no distinction. Either this shows a breakdown of leadership, or it reflects very questionable leadership from the top down—remember I mentioned that workers tend to do what their leaders do. This practice—as articulated by a White House senior adviser—turns John Mitchell's adage into something you would read in Kafka, or Orwell. It turns Mitchell's statement on its head. In effect, it is a sly, Washington way of saying "watch what we say, not what we do." It says "watching what we do is irrelevant; only words are relevant."

This clarifies a lot for me, Mr. President. It reinforces my perception of the void in moral leadership in this White House. But it also gives us a glimpse into how the continuing charade of illusions is being conducted and perpetrated by this White House. It does so precisely because of an absence of leadership.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE OAK RIDGE BOYS

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I apologize for being a bit late, but I was listening to the Oak Ridge Boys next door. You might be able to hear them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair was listening, too.

Mr. DOLE. They were very good.

EARTH DAY

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, as America marks Earth Day 1996, I would like to